(b) Setting up of a gas terminal at Usar would depend on the availability of adequate gas in the Western offshore region, and on the techno-economic feasibility of the project.

Production of Raw Petroleum Coke

2160. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that public sector refineries at Barauni, Bongaigaon, Digboi and Gauha'ti jointly have the capacity to produce Raw Petroleum Coke @2.90 lakh tonne per annum whereas actual production has never crossed 2.34 Lakh tonne, if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(b) whether it is also a fact that for utilising the total installed capacity of Calcination Units, there is a demand for about 4.60 Lakh TPA of raw petroleum coke;

(c) if so, what is the allocation made by Indian Oil Corporation alongwith the reason for the short-fall and discrimination in supply of raw material to Public Sector Units and those in SSI sector;

(d) whether Government have any long-term plan for augmenting the supply of Raw Petroleum Coke to ensure optimum utilisation of the installed Calcination capacity in the country;

(e) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(f) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) to (c): Production of Raw Petroleum Coke (RPC) in the four refineries was over 3 Lakh tonnes in 1989-90. Currently the production has been lower due to reduced availability of Assam crude. After meeting the requirement of captive calcining units of Public Sector Undertakings the balance available quantity of Raw Petroleum Coke is allotted to the recognised Calcining units on equitable basis prorated to their licenced/assessed capacity.

(d) to (f): RPC is produced only in Coking units and as such is a byproduct. There are plans to increase cooking- units capacity alongwith expansion of Bongaigaon Refinery and setting up of refinery at Numaligarh.

Supply of Gas to Fertilizer Plants

2161. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Gas Authority of India Ltd. propose to delay the supply of gas by two years to the upcoming fertilizer plants along the HBO. pipeline in the private sector;

(b) is so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what is its likely overall impact on the economic *via-bility* of the upcoming fertilizer plants as also on the existing fertilizer units?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Decline in Prices of Oil

2162. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the world oil prices have registered a fall;

(b) if so, what is the percentage of fall in the oil prices in the major oil markets; and

(c) what steps Government have taken to tie-up the oil purchases from both spot markets and for term contracts for 1992-93 with dip in the oil prices?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) and (b) Oil prices have fluctuated both upwards and downwards.

(c) Prices under term contracts as well as in spot purchases are market related and are linked to the international prices at the time of supplies. Spot purchases are made on a month to month basis whereas term contracts are generally for